

CENTER FOR MACEDONIANS ABROAD
SOCIETY FOR MACEDONIAN STUDIES

MACEDONIA

HISTORY AND POLITICS



EKDOTIKE ATHENON

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EKDOTIKE ATHENON S.A.

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ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ
MACEDONIA

ΘΡΑΚΗ
THRACI

ΗΠΕΙΡΟΣ
EPIROS

ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΑ
THESSALIA

ΑΙΤΩΛΙΑ
AETOLIA

ΒΟΙΩΤΙΑ
BOEOTIA

ΑΤΤΙΚΗ
ATTICA

ΠΕΛΟΠΟΝΝΗΣΟΣ
PELOPONNISOS



Part One

MACEDONIA IN HISTORY

Macedonia in Antiquity

Historical evidence and archaeological finds point to the existence of Greek-speaking inhabitants of the North Pindus mountains in the period 2200-2100 B.C. These Protohellenic tribes are thought to have broken away from the main bulk of the family of Indo-European peoples in the course of the 5th millennium B.C. and to have spread throughout the area known today as Northern Greece.

In the early centuries of the second millennium B.C. three basic groups of Greek-speaking peoples can be distinguished: a) the South-Eastern group (in the NW part of Thessaly), whose principal representatives were the Ionians; b) the Eastern group (W Macedonia), with two dialect sub-groups, the Arcadian and the Aeolian; and c) the Western group, of which the tribe of the Makednoi was the most populous.

At about this time, these Protohellenic tribes, led by the Ionians, began a slow advance southwards. Here they came into contact with the Pre-hellenic populations of Crete and the islands, who had reached a high cultural level. The Ionians were followed south by the Eastern group of peoples, those who used the Aeolian dialect. It was from these populations, which included the Achaeans, the Lapiths, the Minyans and others, that Mycenaean civilisation was to spring.

The Western group, and the Makednoi first and foremost, split. One group pushed into Central Greece and the Peloponnese. Another established itself in Doris, where it mixed with the local populations and eventually acquired the name "Dorians". A third group made its way to Thessaly, while a fourth —the Macedonians— spread out through the regions which

Representation of the head of Hercules, 330-325 B.C. Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki.

today are called Western, Southern and Central Macedonia. This group, Greek-speaking like the others, did not move south, and for some centuries remained outside the rapid cultural development of its related peoples, who had come into contact with the highly-developed Creto-insular populations of the south.

This brief description of the migrations of the Greek-speaking peoples from the north southwards also explains the relationship between Macedonians and Dorians, which ancient sources often refer to. The Macedonians, that is, were not Dorians, since, as we have seen, the latter people acquired its name at a later date. However, the Dorians and the Macedonians belong to the ethnolinguistic group of the Makednoi, from which the Dorians split away to seek their fortunes in the south.

In historical times —the 8th century B.C.— the Macedonians, hitherto aloof from the enormously important cultural developments taking place in the south, began gradually to occupy a place in the limelight of history. All the ancient writers classify the Macedonians among the Greek-speaking family of peoples.

In the 7th century B.C., Orestis (the area around what is today Kastoria) is mentioned as the birthplace of the Macedonian dynasty of the Argeads and the Temenids. The name "Argeads" has created the impression that the Macedonian kings traced their descent back to Argos in the Peloponnese, but today most scholars believe that this impression is the result of confusion between Argos in the Peloponnese and Argos Orestikon just south of Kastoria. However, the fact that the same placename was used by both the Macedonians and the Greek peoples of the south does prove their common ethnolinguistic ancestry. In both cases, "Argos" is an indigenous placename, not a loan-word.

In the course of the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. the Macedonians moved east from Orestis and settled, in succession, in the areas of Pieria, Bottiaea (Mount Vermion), Eordaea (the modern city of Ptolemaïda) and Almopia (today Aridaia). They then crossed the river Axios and approached the borders of Chalkidiki. The tribes which had previously dwelt in these areas —Pelasgians and others— were driven out or, in some cases, assimilated.

By this time the Macedonians were beginning to break out of their isolation, as the influence of the developed south penetrated into Macedonia through the colonies founded in Chalkidiki and through increasing land and sea communication. Thus the Macedonian world was the scene of rapid cultural development, reaching its peak in the reigns of Kings Amyntas, Philip II and Alexander the Great.

It would be difficult today to advance the claim that the Macedonians were not part of the ancient Greek world. Recent archaeological finds in

conjunction with linguistic analysis and the discovery of large numbers of new inscriptions—all in Greek—with a vast range of Greek names prove that there was never any break (either cultural or linguistic) in the unity of the Macedonians with the other Greeks. Indeed the dissemination of the Greek language and Greek culture throughout the known world by Alexander the Great and his Macedonians provides the most irrefutable confirmation of this. The unity of the Macedonians and the rest of the Greeks is proved once more every year, with the finds brought to light at the major archaeological sites of Pella, Vergina, Dion, Aiani and Sindos, and scores of less well-known sites (such as those in the Voio, Kozani, Kastoria, Florina, Edessa, Aridaia and Kilkis areas) and, of course, in Thessaloniki itself and in Chalkidiki.

Macedonia under the Romans

Macedonia continued to be a Greek land under the *Epigonoï* (the successors of Alexander the Great) and for some two centuries was the core of larger state units ruled by Macedonian kings. It was only after the decisive battle of Pydna in 168 B.C. that Macedonia ceased to exist as an independent state and came under Roman domination. Its territories were divided into four semi-autonomous regions.

Despite Roman rule, the Macedonian provinces prospered, and attracted new colonists from the East and from Italy. For the first time, Jewish communities appeared. However, as can be seen from the inscriptions, the Roman colonists were gradually Hellenised.

During the 3rd century A.D. there were successive invasions of Goths and other tribes related to them, but these attacks were beaten off and did not lead to ethnological adulteration. In A.D. 324, Byzantium became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. This had a positive effect on the further development of Macedonia and particularly on that of its capital, Thessaloniki, which soon grew to the point where it was regarded as the second most important city in the Byzantine Empire.

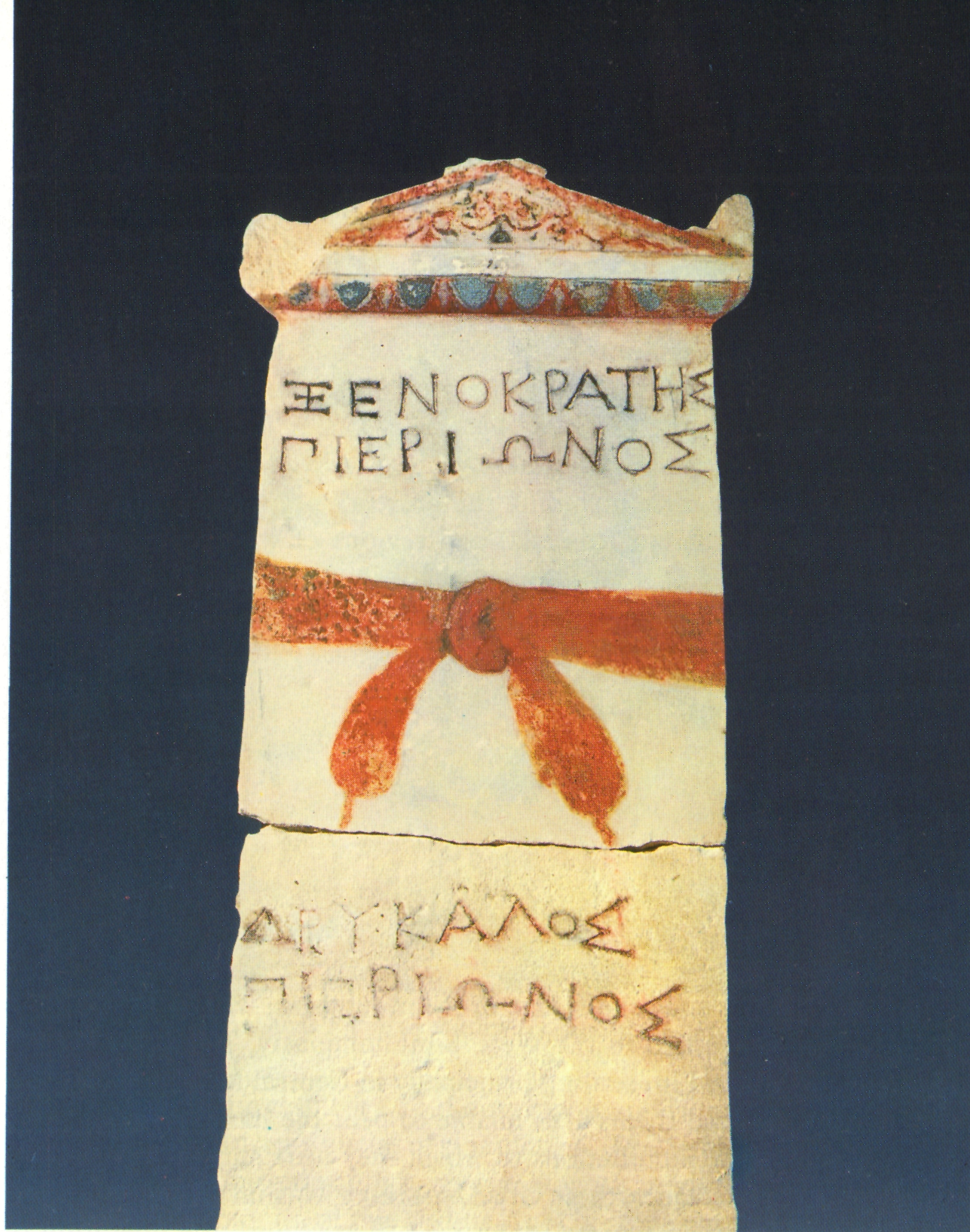
It should be noted, finally, that Macedonia was the main gateway through which Christianity entered the continent of Europe. We all know of the vision which appeared to St Paul one night in Troas and changed the whole course of European history: "These stood *a man of Macedonia*, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). It is significant that the Apostle of the Nations naturally regarded the Macedonians as Greeks and preached and wrote his epistles to them in the Greek language.

Macedonia during the Byzantine period — Slav invasions

With the exception of some enclaves of Latin-speaking and other peoples, the fundamentally Greek population of Macedonia remained effectively unchanged until the 7th century A.D., when various Slav races (Drogovites, Strumonites, Sagoudates, and others) began to settle in the area of Macedonia. With the permission of the Byzantine authorities, these tribes formed small Slavic enclaves known to the Byzantines as "Sclaviniae". Throughout the 7th century the Slavs fought the Byzantines and made repeated attacks on Thessaloniki, though without success. In 688 Justinian II won a decisive victory over them, and forcibly removed many of them to Bithynia in Asia Minor. For a long time the Slavs lived peacefully in the European provinces of the Byzantine Empire and, as can be seen from Byzantine writers, many of them were Hellenised.

In the meantime the Balkans had been invaded by Finno-Tartar tribes, the Proto-Bulgars, who in turn began to gain sway over the Slavs and the other peoples who lived in the area which today is Bulgaria. However, these tribes were assimilated linguistically by the Slavs, who far outnumbered them. The amalgamation of these peoples—who jointly used the name Bulgars—created the medieval state of Bulgaria.

At this point it should be noted that there is considerable controversy amongst scholars with regard to the extent of the "Bulgarisation" of the Slav tribes which had settled in parts of Macedonia. The historians of Skopje (former Yugoslav Macedonia) maintain that there were no Bulgars in Macedonia during the Middle Ages, and that Samuel was a Slav Macedonian king who fought against Byzantines and Bulgars alike. However, the Byzantine sources reveal that Samuel's kingdom was a multi-racial one, and that for a short period in the 10th century it extended further than Bulgaria, into Macedonia and even further south and north. The fact remains, nonetheless, that despite the dynamism which this state displayed for a few decades it was unable to dislodge Byzantine rule over the whole of Macedonia or bring about any radical change in its ethnological composition. The major centres of population in southern Macedonia did not fall into the hands of Samuel and continued to be Greek, without interruption. In the rural areas of northern Macedonia, on the other hand—in areas, that is, which today are mostly within the frontiers of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, though some lie to the south—it would appear that there was a solid Slav element. After the overthrow of Samuel's state by the Byzantine Emperor Basil II, known as "the Bulgarslayer" (11th century), the Greek population of the rural areas revived and there was a Greek renaissance throughout the length and breadth of Macedonia.



One of the tombstones from the "Great Mound" ("Great Toumba").

In the 14th century, the Serbian empire of Stefan Dushan spread into Macedonia. However, this short-lived empire, which preceded the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, had no effective impact on the ethnological nature of Macedonia, as explained by Professor A. Vacalopoulos in his *History of Macedonia*. Serbian rule left in its passage a few more Slav enclaves, which reinforced the strata of Slav population already there. More importantly, however, Serbian rule left behind it tales of a great, though transient, empire.

It should be noted that these misty recollections of a glorious past played their part in inciting the national awakening of the Serbs in the 19th century to put forward claims on Macedonia. A similar process occurred

with the national awakening of the Bulgarians, who, during the 19th century, laid claim to the title deeds of Macedonia by virtue of its shortlived occupation by Czar Samuel.

It is, perhaps, necessary to emphasise at this point that during the Byzantine era and, later, in the Ottoman period the term "Macedonia" lost its former geographical implications. According to the historians Amantos, Zakythinos and Vacalopoulos, the Byzantine writers often applied the term Macedonia to areas including the greater part of modern Albania, Northern Thrace (Eastern Rumelia) and regions of what is today Greek Thrace. That the term "Macedonian" had, in Byzantine times, lost the national and even the geographical meaning which it had had in antiquity is proved by the fact that the "Macedonian dynasty" of Byzantine emperors actually consisted of princes from Thrace.

Ottoman rule in Macedonia

The Ottoman conquest of Macedonia, which was completed during the 15th century, caused major changes in the population of the Balkans in general and of Macedonia in particular. The Christian population began to abandon the plains and take refuge in the mountains, while the economic and intellectual élite fled to the West. Simultaneously, Turkmen populations (Yürüks) moved in, settling principally in Central Macedonia. Those Christians who found themselves unable to bear the harshness of the Ottoman yoke and the humiliations to which they were subjected embraced Islam. Known as *Valaades*, these Greek-speaking Muslim populations were still to be found in some parts of the Kozani area until the liberation of Macedonia in 1912. Later, with the exchange of populations of 1923-24, they shared the fate of their co-religionists and settled in Turkey.

In and after the 17th century the situation stabilised somewhat and the Greek populations returned to the plains. Since the vast Ottoman Empire had no borders, there were widespread population movements. As Professor Vacalopoulos notes in his *History of Macedonia* (p. 7):

"Muslims and Christians availed themselves of the opportunity to move freely in every direction, towards Macedonia and inside it, and they interbred and intermingled with the local populations, creating new settlements, new living conditions and new problems. While on the one hand Turks entered and settled in various parts of Western, Central and Eastern Macedonia, on the other hand the Greeks of Thessaly and primarily of Macedonia and Epirus moved on, advancing peacefully northwards into Serbia, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, forming Greek colonies



The large gold sarcophagus found in the main chamber of "Philip's tomb".

in the cities of those countries, founding towns and villages or injecting new blood into very ancient nuclei of population. The South Slavs and, above all, the Bulgars, moved south in search of work, revitalising the remnants of the old Slav colonies of the Middle Ages in some parts of Macedonia or forming new settlements of their own".

In this way, the Slav element gained in strength while the Slavic-Bulgarian language gained ground in the northern zone (what today is former Yugoslav Macedonia) and in the central area. After the 18th century, however, the Greek element flourished in a multitude of ways in the economic, social and educational sectors, thus leading to the complete domination of the area by Greek intellectual and cultural influences. With the support and guidance of the Greek clergy, the Christian masses of Macedonia acquired a consciousness of their Greek identity. It is characteristic that numerous Slavic-speaking Christians sent their children to Greek schools, fought against the Ottoman Empire during the Greek War of Independence of 1821-28 and later took part, throughout the 19th century, in all the Greek risings in Macedonia, fighting for the unification of Macedonia with the free Greek State.

It is worth noting that during the Ottoman period there was no administrative area called "Macedonia". Foreign travellers and diplomats did tend to refer to some *sanjaks* (Turkish administrative divisions) as Macedonian; but these included areas which had never been part of historical Macedonia, such as Kjustendil and Skopje.

Greco-Slavic rivalry over Macedonia

After the foundation, in 1870, of an independent Bulgarian church known as the Exarchate, open rivalry broke out between Greece and Bulgaria over which of the two was to dominate Macedonia. In reality, this rivalry focused on the question of the national consciousness among the Slavic-speaking masses inhabiting the central zone of Macedonia. According to consular reports of the time, this zone lay between the Kastoria-Ptolemaïda-Yannitsa-Zichni-Serres line in the south and the Ohrid-Prilep-Strumitsa-Melnik-Nevrokop line in the north.

After the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, which proved a disaster for Greece, the Bulgarians managed to win over a considerable proportion of the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Macedonia. Thus it came about that on the feast of the Prophet Elijah (20 July) in 1903 there was a Bulgarian rising, known as the Ilinden rising, which the Turkish army soon bloodily suppressed. This rising led also to the destruction of numerous Greek communities and towns in Western and Northern Macedonia, including that of Krushevo. The rising, however, made plain the danger that Macedonia might be lost for ever, which stimulated a general mobilisation on the part of the Greeks. So it came about, in 1904, that the armed "Macedonian Struggle", which had begun in 1870, now intensified and did not end until 1908. During this period, units made up of volunteers from the free Greek state, from Crete and from other as yet unredeemed areas poured into Macedonia in solidarity with the local Greek Macedonian fighters. Together they managed to check the spread of Bulgarian infiltration and to maintain the predominantly Greek character of the central and southern parts of Macedonia. It should not be overlooked that in many areas the volunteer units were made up principally of Slavic- and Vlach-speaking guerrillas, fighting on the side of the Greek cause. Their devotion to the Greek national cause led the Bulgarians to call them "Grekomans", that is, fanatical Greeks.

When the Greco-Bulgarian rivalry was at its height, various sets of statistics claiming to show the ethnological composition of Macedonia were published. The numerical data presented varied wildly, since the sta-



Statuette of young man on horseback, Macedonia, 4th c. B.C. Archaeological Museum, Pella

tistics were based on different criteria and were intended to serve the national aspirations of their authors. The Bulgarians usually took the language spoken as their criterion, while the Greeks relied on the national consciousness of the specific population or its ecclesiastical affiliation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate or the Bulgarian Exarchate. Perhaps closer to reality was the Turkish census conducted by Hilmi Pasha in 1904, which showed the numbers of Greeks and Bulgarians as follows:

	Greeks	Bulgarians
<i>Vilayet</i> of Thessaloniki	373,227	207,317
<i>Vilayet</i> of Monastir	261,283	178,412
	<u>634,510</u>	<u>385,729</u>

The *sanjak* of Skopje in the *vilayet* of Kosovo had 13,452 Greek and 172,735 Bulgarian inhabitants.

It should be noted that Hilmi Pasha's census, like all the previous censuses —whether Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, or European— mentions

the existence of Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Serbs, Jews, and other nationalities, but not of "Macedonians". "Macedonian", in the geographical sense, was the name applied to all the inhabitants of the broader geographical area of Macedonia. This clearly indicates that at the beginning of the 20th century no-one had detected the existence of a distinct Macedonian Nation.

The armed Macedonian Struggle was cut short by the Young Turks' revolution of July 1908, which overthrew the absolutist regime of the Sultan. The Young Turks issued a general amnesty and promised equality of civil rights for all nationalities. In these circumstances, the armed conflict between Greeks and Bulgarians and Bulgarians and Serbs came to an end.

For the Greeks, the last phase of the Macedonian Struggle (1904-1908), which had begun in the most adverse conditions, eventually proved highly successful. Greek supremacy in the south had been consolidated and there was now a powerful Greek presence in the disputed central zone. The morale of the indigenous population had burgeoned, and the Greeks of Macedonia were now in a position, alone, to withstand foreign designs upon their territory. The Macedonian Struggle had made it more than clear to the European Powers that the Greeks of Macedonia were to be the most important factor in moulding the future of this Ottoman province.

The success must be attributed to the fact that the Struggle attracted Greeks from the free State, from Crete and from the other still unredeemed areas, who fought side by side with the Greek Macedonians. In other words, the Macedonian Struggle involved the whole of the Greek nation in a way that only the War of Liberation, in 1821, and the Cretan risings of the 19th century had done.

The second factor in the success noted above should be sought in the point made by British historian Douglas Dakin, namely that the Greeks were fighting in an area in which the population was well-disposed and even related to them, with a profound commitment to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek idea, even if not always speaking the language.

The Liberation of Macedonia

The reward for the efforts and sacrifices of the participants in the Macedonian Struggle came with the victorious Balkan Wars of 1912-13, by which Macedonia shook off the Ottoman yoke that had lain upon it for five centuries. The Treaty of Bucharest (10 August 1913) finally fixed the frontiers of the Balkan states in Macedonia.

The part of Macedonia which came into Greek possession included most



Scenes from representations of works by Euripides. National Archaeological Museum, Athens

of the *vilayets* of Thessaloniki and Monastir, with the exception of some provinces which today lie within former Yugoslav and Bulgarian Macedonia.

To be more specific, the broader area of Macedonia was divided up as follows:

Greek Macedonia	34,603 km ² or 51.57%
Yugoslav Macedonia	25,714 km ² or 38.32%
Bulgarian Macedonia	6,789 km ² or 10.11%

To quote from Ekdotike Athenon's volume *Macedonia: 4000 Years of Greek History and Civilization* (Athens 1983, p. 484):

"The solution achieved in the second decade of the twentieth century can only be considered the most natural outcome of a long process. Ottoman domination had been thrown off. The mainly Slavic northern areas went to the Slavic Balkan countries (notwithstanding the fact that the amount of territory received by Serbia and Bulgaria was in inverse proportion to the national preference of the Slav population). By a curious coincidence, the southern area that went to Greece was almost identical in extent to the 'historical' Macedonia of the classical period, with the excep-



The most exquisitely painted tombstone found in the "Great Mound".

tion of a small strip that remained within the Serbian and Bulgarian territories. This southern zone included, in addition to the Greek-speaking population, the majority of the Slavic-speaking inhabitants who had retained a Greek national conscience."

Nonetheless, considerable Greek populations remained within the territories passed to Serbia and Bulgaria, and quite a number of Bulgarians were left on Greek soil. The First World War which followed, the Asia Minor campaign, and its dramatic conclusion were to cause widespread movements of population, which stabilised the ethnic homogeneity of Greek Macedonia.

Part Two

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION IN MODERN TIMES

The inter-war years

During a period of a dozen or so years (1913-1925), the enormous movements of population which took place in Greek Macedonia changed the ethnological composition of the area. In the period of sustained warfare (1912-1919) tens of thousands of Bulgarians left, and this shift was completed by the departure of a further 53,000 Bulgarians by virtue of the voluntary exchange of populations between Greece and Bulgaria. This left only the Slavic-speakers principally in Western Macedonia, most of whom had a Greek national consciousness. League of Nations figures dated 1926 give the following picture of the population of Greek Macedonia (at a time when the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey had been completed):

Greeks	1,341,000	88.8%
Muslims	2,000	0.1%
Bulgarians	77,000	5.1%
Others (mainly Jews)	91,000	6.0%
Total	1,511,000	

The liberation of Macedonia and the widespread movements of population which followed led to the three sections of Macedonia, as incorporated into the three Balkan states, becoming part of the life of the respective countries. This process was neither uniform nor rapid.

In Greek Macedonia, the revolutionary ethnological developments led

to the emergence of a homogeneous Greek population, with only sparse alien elements mainly in border districts. The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) put an end to the traditional Greek policy of the "Great Idea". This allowed the Greek governments of the inter-war years to turn their attention to the country's domestic affairs and to the building of the modern Greek state. The "new lands", including Macedonia, experienced difficulties at first in absorbing the influx of refugees, but were later to play a leading part in the economic and social upsurge of modern Greece and her people.

As for the problem of the other ethnic and linguistic groups left within Greek borders, the Greek government attempted, after the signing of the peace treaties ending the First World War, to keep in line with the atmosphere current in Europe at the time, complying to the letter with all the provisions of the League of Nations minority treaties. Overlooking the fact that the Slavic-speakers who had chosen to remain in Greece thought of themselves largely as Greeks, the Greek government of the day agreed, in 1924, to sign with Bulgaria an agreement known as the Kalfov-Politis protocol, by which the Slavic-speaking populations left within Greek territory were acknowledged to be Bulgarian. However, this raised such an outcry in the country—not to mention the fact that Serbia reacted by repudiating the Greco-Serbian treaty of alliance of 1913—that the Greek Parliament refused to ratify the protocol and the League of Nations relieved Greece of the obligations she had undertaken by it. After that Greece regarded the remaining Slavic-speakers—of whom there were in any case not more than 100,000—as Slavic-speaking Greeks, an attitude which was greeted with relief by the vast majority of those concerned, since their national consciousness was Greek, regardless of what language they might speak.

A few years later (1927), a new Greco-Bulgarian agreement settled all the economic issues which had manifested themselves during the mass exchange of populations and remained pending since.

In Bulgarian Macedonia, the influx of large numbers of refugees from the Serbian and Greek zones caused widespread social and political conflict. These populations had not been reconciled to the idea of being uprooted from their homes. They were sharply irridentist and their feelings fed the political revanchism of successive governments in Sofia throughout the inter-war period.

The attempts of pre-war Serbian (Yugoslav) governments to "Serbianise" the Slav populations of Yugoslav Macedonia met with less success. These populations, largely imbued since the period of Turkish rule with the Bulgarian national ideology, continued to be orientated towards Sofia.

After the ethnological restoration of Greek Macedonia, it was only natural that disputes over "the Macedonian question" in the inter-war period should shift principally to the fate of the population of Yugoslav Macedonia. The designs of the Bulgarians —and only secondarily of the Yugoslavs— on Greek Macedonia and Thrace no longer involved the liberation of ethnically kin populations, but was a matter of geopolitical calculation and the search for an outlet to the Aegean.

In the meantime, a new factor had burst dynamically onto the scene. After the end of the war, the leaders of the infant Soviet Union attempted to exploit any instance of smouldering socio-political unrest in Eastern Europe, in the hope that the revolution could be spread to the area. In the early 1920s, Bulgaria appeared to be the ripest of all the Balkan states for a successful attempt to repeat the Soviet experiment. For that reason, the Comintern adopted the view of the Bulgarian communists on the Macedonian question, hoping thus to win over to the cause of Communist revolution the aggrieved masses of the Bulgarian Macedonian refugees. The armed rising attempted in Bulgaria in 1923 failed, but the Comintern continued for a number of years to support Bulgarian nationalist positions as expressed by Bulgarian leaders such as Vasili Kolarov and Georgi Dimitrov (General Secretary of the Comintern).

The line taken by the Comintern and the Balkan Communist Federation (BCF), in which all the Balkan Communist parties were represented was expressed in a series of party texts in the period 1922-24 and provided for the foundation of an "independent and united Macedonia (and Thrace)", which would have consisted of the corresponding geographical departments of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece. The putative state would in effect have been a second Bulgaria. This, at any rate, is what emerges from the initial texts of the Comintern and the BCF, which use the term "Macedonians" to denote not any particular ethnic group but, in general, all the inhabitants of Macedonia and more specifically the Bulgarians of Macedonia.

Even the Yugoslav Communist Party, as can be seen from the decisions of its Third Conference of 1923, when referring to the oppressed masses in Yugoslav Macedonia, spoke only of "Turks, Albanians, Bulgarians and Vlachs".

Despite their initial reservations, the Communist Parties of Greece and Yugoslavia in the end came into line with the Comintern. Some cadres, including the historian Yannis Kordatos, editor of the party newspaper *Rizospastis*, resigned from the Party, claiming that the conditions —at least in Greek Macedonia after the major exchanges of populations— made the line taken by their Bulgarian comrades entirely groundless.



Head of Philip. Roman period.



Depiction of Olympias, wife of Philip II. Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki.

The Comintern persisted in its pro-Bulgarian line until 1935, when international conditions in view of the rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe led to the popular front policy, which did not favour the advancing of nationalist or separatist slogans capable of alienating the broad masses of the people. The KKE (Communist Party of Greece) decided at its Sixth Congress in December 1935 to adopt a new line on the Macedonian question, replacing the "independent and united Macedonia" line with one of complete equality for all minorities.

The Second World War and the Triple Occupation

The Second World War provided Bulgaria with an opportunity to annex the Macedonian territories of Yugoslavia and Greece, as well as Western Thrace. The Filov government, with the approval of King Boris, allied itself with Hitler's Germany, and thus when the Nazi armed forces stabbed the Greek Army, which was fighting against Italy, in the back the Bulgarians were given their reward.

By virtue of the Hitler-Filov accords, Bulgaria occupied almost the whole of Yugoslav Macedonia —with the exception of the western provinces, which fell within the Italian zone of occupation— and, initially at least, only the eastern part of Greek Macedonia. The Germans kept Central Macedonia under their own command, turning the western prefectures over to the Italians. Later, however, in 1943, after Italy had capitulated, the Bulgarians gained German permission to extend their zone of occupation to include the prefectures of Chalkidiki and Kilkis, while in Western Macedonia they exploited their contacts in the local German *Kommandaturs* to set up security battalions of pro-Bulgarian Slavic-speakers, known as *Ohrana*.

Throughout the occupation the Bulgarian authorities implemented a policy of forcible "Bulgarisation". The mass expulsion of that part of the population which was of refugee origin and the financial, moral and even physical annihilation of the remainder of the Greek population was combined with the implanting of colonists from Bulgaria itself.

However, the complete incorporation into the Kingdom of Bulgaria of Eastern Macedonia (and Western Thrace) was averted, thanks to massive demonstrations in Athens and in other cities in occupied Greece. The German authorities calculated the risk to their own security interests and forbade their Bulgarian allies to proceed with annexation.

During this period some of the Slavic-speakers underwent a crisis of

consciousness. Although most of them remained firmly devoted to the Greek idea —and many took part in the Greek resistance movement— there were quite a number who swallowed Bulgarian propaganda. Either deliberately or out of opportunism, they became tools in the hands of the Bulgarian occupying forces and persecuted their Greek compatriots.

The wartime Yugoslav Macedonian Policy

At the same period, significant developments, which would later affect the situation in Greek Macedonia, were taking place in Yugoslav Macedonia, most of which had been ceded to Bulgaria. Initially, a large part of the population, unhappy with the Serbian administration, greeted the Bulgarian army as liberators. Even the local Communist leaders seceded from the Yugoslav Party and joined its Bulgarian counterpart. The inconsiderate behaviour, however, of the Bulgarian authorities created a much cooler climate, which developed into hostility between the local population and the Bulgarian occupation forces. Thus, with considerable delay, the Titoist partisan movement began to spread also in Yugoslav Macedonia. It was at this critical moment that the Yugoslav communists announced their manifesto for the post-war reorganisation of the Yugoslav state on a federal basis. One of the six federated republics was to be the “Socialist [at that time, ‘People’s’] Republic of Macedonia”, whose Slav population would cease to be regarded as “Serbian” or “Bulgarian” and would acquire a new name: “Macedonian”.

The name “Macedonian” was relatively widespread among the local South Slav population, but as an indication of geographical origin rather than an ethnic attribute. The use of this term as a definition of a particular national South Slav population group was a neologism, but it was one which served the political purposes of the new leaders of Yugoslavia. By giving ethnic content to a geographical term, the new political leaders hoped to be able to construct a nationality cut off from both its Serbian and its Bulgarian roots, particularly the latter.

The new leaders of Yugoslavia were not content, however, to restrict the implementation of their experiment only to their own country. Their aim was to exploit the strength of their position to impose their views on Greek and Bulgarian Macedonia as well. Having invented the “Macedonian” nationality, they worked out a twin goal: to eliminate the Bulgarian influence on their own people, and at the same time to provide a final solution to the Macedonian question by incorporating both Bulgarian



Detail from a depiction of Alexander the Great on horseback striking down a Persian foot-soldier. End of the 4th c. B.C. Archaeological Museum, Constantinople.

Macedonia and Greek Macedonia into a united Macedonian state which would then be converted into a federated state in the post-war Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

For that purpose, one of Tito's deputies, Vukmanović-Tempo, was sent to Greece in 1943 to persuade the leaders of the KKE and ELAS (the Popular Liberation Army) to set up a joint headquarters for all the guerilla armies fighting in the Balkans. In reality, the aim of the Yugoslav partisans was to bring national resistance in Macedonia as a whole under their own command. Their proposal was turned down. Tempo then tried to form separate armed Slavo-Macedonian units in the hope of winning Greek Slavic-speakers over to the "Macedonian" ideology. Although this proposal, too, was rejected, permission was finally given for the formation of a political organisation of Slavo-Macedonians, known as SNOF (the Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Front), which was in effect guided covertly by Yugoslav partisans. After this, permission was granted for the development of Slavo-Macedonian battalions within larger ELAS units and Yugoslav commissars were not prevented from spreading propaganda

for the idea of a "Macedonian nation". To explain this, the argument was advanced that it would be possible in this way to attract to the guerrilla forces Slavic-speakers who had come under the influence of Fascist Bulgarian propaganda.

It is indeed true that in the last months of the occupation, as the might of Nazism crumbled throughout Europe, many members of the Bulgarian *Ohrana* threw away the shoulder-flashes of the Fascist Bulgarian army and enlisted *en masse* in the SNOF and the Slavo-Macedonian battalions, passing themselves off as "Macedonian" Communist resistance fighters.

In the meantime, the secret contacts of the Slavo-Macedonians and their direct dependence on the Yugoslav Macedonian military staff had begun to come to the attention of the leaders of ELAS and were causing serious concern, to such a point that, shortly before Liberation, ELAS units in the Florina-Kastoria area clashed with armed Slavo-Macedonian detachments and pushed them back into Yugoslavia. The term "Slavo-Macedonian" refers to the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of the broader area of Macedonia who embraced the "Macedonian nationality" devised by Tito.

The critical five years: 1945-50

Nonetheless the Slavo-Macedonians, with the backing of the newly-formed Tito regime in Yugoslavia, kept up their efforts. Just a few days after the Varkiza agreement, Slavo-Macedonian émigrés from Greece formed an organisation named NOF (National Liberation Front) in Skopje, and sent armed guerrilla bands back to the border areas of Greek Macedonia. The activities of these bands attracted the criticism of the KKE, since they were in conflict with the terms of the Varkiza agreement and gave the government forces an excuse for applying severe measures to suppress them.

However, when the Civil War began in 1946, the Slavo-Macedonians, returned to Greek Macedonia in great numbers and joined the Greek Communist movement, while still retaining their own organisation, the NOF. To judge from the various collections of documents and memoirs which have been published in Skopje, the Slavo-Macedonians—that is, the part of the Slavic-speaking population whose national consciousness was Slavic—were fighting what they saw at this time as a "national liberation struggle for the Macedonians of the Aegean" in order to win their national rights. These rights were none other than the policy which Yugoslavia was officially pursuing at this time and which was intended to incorporate the



Antigonus Gonatas, the mother of Philas and the philosopher Menedemus. National Museum, Naples.

Macedonian territories of both Greek and Bulgarian Macedonia into the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

In the meantime, and while the outcome of the civil war in Greece still hung in the balance, the Yugoslavs exerted unbearable pressure on their Bulgarian comrades in order to blackmail them into ceding Bulgarian Macedonia to Yugoslavia. In the end, by the Bled accords of 1947, Dimitrov agreed, in return for minor concessions, to acknowledge the inhabitants of Bulgarian Macedonia (Pirin) as “Macedonians” and to pave the way for the incorporation of the province of Pirin into the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. The incorporation of Greek Macedonia would await the outcome of the civil war.

The split between Stalin and Tito, which occurred suddenly in the summer of 1948, upset all the Yugoslav calculations about playing a leading role in the Balkans using the Macedonian question as the central lever. Bulgaria seized the opportunity to release itself from the concessions it had made over the Macedonian question. It repudiated the theory of the “Macedonian nation” and drove the commissars from Skopje off its territory. It then attempted to exploit the difficulties which the Yugoslavs were facing in order to advance once more the pre-war slogan of an “independent and

united Macedonia". This slogan also served to increase the more general political pressure which the Soviet Union was at that time exerting on Tito.

The Moscow-Belgrade split, however, also had dramatic repercussions for Greek Macedonia. The leadership of the KKE judged it to be expedient to fall into line with the Soviet Union in attacking Tito and at the same time adopt its new policy towards Macedonia. Thus, by decision of the 5th Plenum of the Central Committee, in January 1949, the KKE revived the old pro-Bulgarian slogan of the "independent and united Macedonia" in the framework of a future Balkan Communist Federation.

This shift of policy had grave consequences for the course of military operations, since the Yugoslavs, in order to protect their own rear, closed the border with Greece, which until that time had been the main channel through which supplies had flowed to the Communist forces in Greece. Some of the NOF supporters fled to Yugoslav Macedonia, where they settled. Later, when the armed conflict ended in August 1949, the remaining masses of NOF supporters followed the other Greek political refugees into exile in the countries of Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union.

The final outcome of those five tragic years was that those Slavic-speakers who had originally joined forces with the Bulgarians during the occupation and later identified with Skopje's Slavo-Macedonians left Greece. This was the last exodus from Greek Macedonia of people who felt themselves to be Slavs or had pro-Slav sentiments. Certainly, in the maelstrom of the fighting and the events of the time injustices must have been done, and consequently there later occurred a kind of selective repatriation of Slavic-speakers with Greek national consciousness. Those Slavic-speakers with Greek national consciousness who had been fighting to keep Greece free and Macedonia Greek ever since the Macedonian Struggle remained in Greece. It was these frontier fighters who, even in the most difficult times, refused to become instruments of the Bulgarians' occupation forces or of Tito's SNOF and NOF.

Yugoslavia, faced with the nightmarish prospect of a Soviet invasion, sought support in the West, which opened up the way for the normalisation of relations with Greece and the signing, in 1954, of a tripartite Balkan pact of defensive alliance, of which Turkey also was a member.

The new circumstances led Yugoslavia to drop the territorial demands it had been putting forward and to restrict itself to formal claims for the recognition of "Macedonian" minorities. These claims were, however, totally insubstantiated, since the objective conditions to justify them no longer existed. The KKE, on its part, soon realised the enormous political cost of the decision taken by the 5th Plenum and reversed it with a theoretical position involving "the equality of the Slavo-Macedonians". However,



The Interment. Second half of the 12th c., from the Church of St Panteleimon at Nerezi.

since the Slavo-Macedonians concerned were no longer in Greece, this position gradually lost force and was officially abandoned with the categorical statement by General Secretary Harilaos Florakis in Thessaloniki in September 1988 that “for the KKE, there is no Macedonian minority in Greece”.

Lastly, Bulgaria too dropped the slogan of a united Macedonia after the death of Stalin in 1953. After a considerable amount of vacillation — directly connected to the state of Soviet-Yugoslav relations at any given time — Bulgaria also adopted the position that there is no “Macedonian nation” and that consequently there can be no “Macedonian” minority in Bulgaria.

As a conclusion, after the upheavals of the period 1940-50, the three sections of Macedonia went over to licking their wounds and have since followed, peacefully, the political, economic and social development of the countries to which they belong.

The internal "Macedonian question" of Yugoslavia

The solution which Tito arrived at for the Macedonian problem of Yugoslavia —even before the war was really over— was quite accommodating. By acknowledging the Slav inhabitants of Yugoslav "Macedonia" as "Macedonians", he eliminated (or hoped to eliminate) the links between that population and Bulgaria. On the other hand, this gave him the initiative in imposing a unilateral Yugoslav solution to the Macedonian problem by incorporating the other two geographical regions into the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Of course, the break with Stalin in 1948 and the end of the Civil War in Greece in 1949 upset these plans, as we have seen already. However, since it had proved impossible to settle the whole Macedonian question unilaterally, it was essential that it be consolidated at least within Yugoslav Macedonia. This was a far from easy task. A whole people, who for decades had been identified with or orientated towards the Bulgarian national ideas, and a smaller section which had had a similar orientation towards Serbia, would have to sever these bonds and adopt an entirely novel national ideology, the "Macedonian" ideology. That undertaking was Yugoslavia's domestic "Macedonian problem" in the post-war decades.

The problem amounted to neither more nor less than the construction of an artificial nationality, the "Macedonian" nationality. The task was difficult, not only because the Bulgarian consciousness was relatively highly developed in a considerable portion of the population of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, but also because the new nationality did not have the features which are essential for its establishment as such. It followed that these components had to be discovered or invented.

First of all, the nationality was given a state identity. The "Macedonians" acquired a government for the first time —even if only on a local scale— with a Prime Minister and a Cabinet. Senior cadres from Yugoslav Macedonia flanked the federal authorities in Belgrade. Of course, all the important decisions were taken in the capital, but the disputes between the nationalities led the republican governments to gradually take on more and more initiative, until they reached the point of acquiring ministers (secretaries) for foreign affairs. At the same time, with its party representatives on the Central Committee, Skopje began to influence the party and government hierarchy in favour of its views.

The second feature of the nationality was its language. It was generally accepted that the language spoken by the Slavs of Macedonia was a dialect of Bulgarian. In order to sever the substantive linguistic bond between the Macedonian Slavs and the Bulgarians, a separate "Macedonian" written

language had to be invented. This was done by exploiting local peculiarities and by borrowing from Serbian and other Slavic languages. However, despite the painstaking efforts of forty years, the new language remained for the open-minded observer or scholar nothing more than an offshoot of Bulgarian: not, of course, that this prevented Skopje from proclaiming near and far that there was a "Macedonian" language.

Throughout the troubled history of the Balkans, religion has usually been a fundamental element in determining, to some extent at least, the national identity of the people of any particular area. For that reason the leaders in Skopje, though atheists themselves, made considerable efforts to create an Autocephalous Church of Macedonia, which was eventually established in 1967 over the objections of the Serbian Patriarchate and the refusal of all the Orthodox Patriarchates and Churches to recognize the uncanonical diktat.

In this way the language and the church, two features which connected the Slavs of Yugoslav Macedonia with the Bulgarians and the Serbs respectively, were radically altered. All that was left was to sever the historical links which connected the past of the Macedonian Slavs with Bulgaria and Greece. Here it was necessary to reinterpret the history of the Balkans since the most ancient times. In this way it would be possible to explain into existence the myth of a "Macedonian nation".

The efforts made by the revisionist historians of Skopje had two basic goals: a) to eliminate from Macedonia any historical or cultural traces of other peoples (Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs) by labelling them all as simply "Macedonian"; and b) to establish the "Macedonian nation" as a historical dogma, dating it not from 1944, when the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was formed, but from 13 centuries before—in other words, from the time when the first Slav tribes settled in Macedonia, in the 7th century A.D.

In dealing with antiquity, these historians resorted to the viewpoint that the ancient Macedonians, like their neighbours the Illyrians and the Thracians, were not Greeks. Only the ruling classes, they said, had been Hellenised, while the mass of the people remained Macedonian, i.e. non-Greek. Thus, when the Slav tribes arrived in Macedonia in the 6th-7th centuries A.D., they mingled with indigenous "non-Greek" Macedonians. This admixture produced the Slavo-Macedonians, a new compound of a fundamentally Slavic nature which could, nonetheless, claim to be the indirect heirs to the heritage of ancient Macedonia. Later, according to Skopje's theory, the "Macedonian" nation sprang from these Slavo-Macedonians.

However simplistic this theory may seem, it was nonetheless employed systematically in order to attribute a "Macedonian" national identity to

the historical heritage of all the national groups which, down the centuries, had lived and left important traces in Macedonia. It was, however, only to be expected that this process of adulteration of the historical physiognomy of Macedonia and the peoples who lived there should provoke violent reaction on the part of Greeks, Bulgarians and even Serbs.

The Bulgarians and the Serbs reacted because the historiographers of Skopje had no inhibition about appropriating the entire historical presence and heritage of other —related— Slav peoples. With the Greeks, matters were more difficult, since the Greek identity is clearly different to that of the Slavs. In order to overcome this difficulty, the Skopje historians hit upon the idea of appropriating and monopolising the name “Macedonia” and its derivatives. This name in fact is known to be of ancient Greek origin, since it referred to the ancient Greek nation of Philip and Alexander.

In medieval times, the word “Macedonian” lost its ethnic connotation. In modern times it came to be used in a geographical sense to refer to any inhabitant of the geographical area of Macedonia in general. In the era of Ottoman rule and after liberation, in all three parts of Macedonia, the inhabitants referred to themselves, in their own languages, using the same geographical name. The Greeks of Macedonia called themselves *Make-dones* (just as the Greeks of Epirus called themselves *Epirotes* or those of Crete *Krites*), while the Slav groups —Serbs, Bulgars, etc.— used the term *Makedontsi* and the Vlachs *Matsedoneni*. However, when in 1944 the new regime in Yugoslavia decided to use the geographical term as an ethnic one, baptising the Slavs of Macedonia “Macedonians”, it was done with the deliberate desire to create confusion. The theorists of Skopje claimed that since there was a state —the Socialist Republic of Macedonia— and a race with the Macedonian name, then everything Macedonian —history, culture, monuments, historical figures— which had come into being or been active in Macedonia was automatically part of the historical heritage of the newly-formed “Macedonian” nation. By playing with the two meanings of the name, the geographical one and the ethnic one, they created such confusion that unsuspecting foreigners were unable to distinguish between the two and unthinkingly came to assume that everything Macedonian must belong to the Slavs of Yugoslav Macedonia.

A few examples should suffice to make clear the extent of this campaign of counterfeiting. A few years ago, the authorities in Skopje organised a touring exhibition of superb Byzantine icons from Macedonia. Many of these were well known as Greek Byzantine works, not only because of their Greek inscriptions but also because of the Greek names of the artists. The exhibition toured numerous capitals under the title “Medieval Macedonian Icons”. It does not take much imagination to conceive what impression

this must have created in the minds of the crowds of visitors as to the identity of these Byzantine treasures. The ironic comments of the very few experts who realised the trick which was being played did not appear to worry the organisers of the exhibition unduly.

Similar examples can be found in modern political history. The Greek War of Independence of 1821, for instance, is transformed into a war of "Macedonian" independence when the reference is to the struggles and sacrifices of the inhabitants of Macedonia.

In the Second World War it is said that "the first victory over the forces of Fascism was won by Macedonians": the argument here is that the heroic victories won by the Greek Army over the Italians in 1940 on the northern front where the Macedonia division was active must be attributed to "Macedonian" arms. And as for the Greek Civil War, when the battles in Macedonia are being described it ceases to be a "civil" war between Greeks but is transformed into a struggle of "Macedonian" guerrillas fighting for "their" liberation and national rehabilitation.

There are countless similar examples. However simplistic these historical myths may have been, the Yugoslav officials responsible for them appeared to be satisfied. The constant repetition over a period of more than 40 years of the same counterfeit historical theories, together with a complete state mechanism which was adapted to the cause of consolidating the mutation experiment of transforming the population of Yugoslav Macedonia into "Macedonians", appeared to them to have brought about positive results. The beliefs which the younger generations in Yugoslav Macedonia hold about the history of Macedonia are those which they have been taught in their schools, not those accepted by scholars throughout the world. With all the zeal of recent converts to nationalism, the young "Macedonians" are so proud of their counterfeit past that they occasionally react with blind fanaticism when anyone dares to question the ordinances of their national existence. Those who resist this brain-washing are dubbed "anti-Macedonians", "Grekomans", "Bulgarophiles" or even —believe it or not— "forgers of history".

Apart from its own separate state entity, its own language, its Church and its history, the newly-formed "Macedonian" nation was also endowed with its own "Great Idea": the dream of a "Greater Macedonia" consisting of the three zones united within the framework of the Yugoslav Federation. After 1948 this vision ceased to be presented in the form of a political programme, but it was maintained indirectly by literature, school textbooks and historical treatises, and even in the statements made by the responsible officials in Skopje, who in Tito's time were wont to declare that "in the same way as there are many different roads to Socialism, so there are

many paths which could lead to a solution to the Macedonian question”.

However as long as political promotion of the vision appeared unrealistic and dangerous for the Yugoslav Federation itself, Belgrade and Skopje adopted the policy of pressing for recognition of “Macedonian” minorities in Yugoslavia’s neighbours, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania. This line became a constitutionally protected doctrine of Yugoslav policy. It began to be implemented as soon as the policy of annexation adopted in the ’40s was abandoned. Of course, the political and ethnic conditions which have come into being in the neighbouring states since the Second World War make Yugoslav reasoning groundless, but the persistence in putting forward the minority claim was connected with the attempt to keep the dream of the “Macedonian” *Great Idea* alive. This became apparent, as we shall see, when the Communist regime collapsed and the free expression of nationalist claims was allowed.

All the same, the truth of the matter is that the Yugoslav government — particularly when Tito was still at the helm — did not allow the vision to develop into something capable of poisoning relations with Greece. In latter years, however, before the collapse, certain malfunctions in domestic economic and political life in Yugoslavia and the confrontations between the various nationalities which lived there provoked the revival of an intense “Macedonian” nationalism, which resulted in both leaders and people being carried away by the idea of declaring an independent republic.

The “Macedonian Question” in the Diaspora

Meanwhile, similar and even more marked nationalistic phenomena were observed in the countries, such as Canada and Australia, to which thousands of people from all three zones of Macedonia have emigrated since the Second World War. The émigrés from Yugoslav Macedonia were, naturally enough, carriers of the “Macedonian” ideology as taught to them in their homeland. They attempted to impose this ideology, with all its distorting historical misinterpretations, in the host countries, and to that end exploited to the full all the scope which countries such as Canada and Australia, which implement “multi-cultural” policies, afforded them — the free development of their particular linguistic and cultural features. They demanded that they be recorded as a special Slavic group under the name “Macedonians”, that they be taught the “Macedonian” language in Canadian and Australian schools and that they be free to promote their “Ma-



The Kanatsoulis mansion in Siatista (1746).

cedonian” cultural characteristics. The demand to be allowed to retain their cultural and linguistic features was not an unreasonable one. The Greek émigrés, too, made full use of the opportunities given them to cultivate and develop their own ethnic and cultural identity. But what caused sharp reaction on the part of the Greek communities was the attempt of the émigrés from Yugoslav Macedonia to monopolise the name “Macedonians” as indicative of their own national identity and to try to impose on the Australian or Canadian educational system their interpretation of the historical past of Macedonia.

The reaction of the Diaspora Greeks was entirely natural and the force of their protests fully justified, given that Macedonians from Greek Macedonia constituted a considerable proportion of the Greek communities in the host countries. These émigrés were proud of their homeland and its

history —as are Greeks from all the other parts of the country— they set up Macedonian associations and federations (such as the Panmacedonian Associations of the USA, Canada and Australia), and gave prominence to their local Macedonian customs, songs and dances. How could they ever have imagined that anyone would call into question their national heritage or —still worse— forbid them even to use their own name, Macedonians?

This confusion was further intensified by the fact that among the émigrés were a few thousand Slavic-speakers from Greek Macedonia. Some of these people —for reasons that have to be traced chiefly to the period 1940-50— had embraced the “Macedonian” national ideology. However, having been born in Greece and spent their childhood there, they did not wish to lose the reflected cultural glory of descent from the ancient Macedonians and Kings Philip and Alexander. As a result, they resorted to a theory of their own about the origins of today’s “Macedonians” —a theory which was even more conceptually ambitious than the myths invented by the historians of Skopje. They claimed that today’s “Macedonians” are a peculiar blend of nationalities which in the course of its history has thrown up great historical figures as diverse as Alexander the Great, Czar Samuel (of the Bulgars), the Byzantine Emperors of the Macedonian dynasty, the Greek freedom fighters Karatasos and Gatsos (who were active in Macedonia during the Greek War of Independence of 1821), the Bulgarian leaders of the 1903 Ilinden rising (among them Gotse Deltchev and Yanne Sandanski), the founders of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia of 1944 and the organisers of the Slavo-Macedonian movement in Greek Macedonia during the period 1943-49.

There was no danger of this theory being challenged, since in the multicultural societies in which it was developed absolute ignorance of history went hand-in-hand with absolute tolerance. The watchword “you are what you say you are” covered even the most peculiar tales. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that in the host countries there began to appear a mongrel pattern in which the ancient Macedonian, medieval Slavic and contemporary Balkan historical heritages were all jumbled up, and a new “Macedonian” identity began to gain ground. It would not be running too great a risk of absurdity to call this identity the “Canado-Macedonian” or “Australo-Macedonian” theory. However, the emotional charge created by semi-ignorance and the cleverly engineered nationalism instilled by the various missionaries sent out by Skopje to centres of immigration led, inevitably, to extreme behaviour. Among the characteristic examples of this were the public demonstrations of Slavo-Macedonians against the 1st International Academic Congress on Macedonia held in Melbourne in



Reception hall in a Kozani mansion. End of the 18th c. Benaki Museum, Athens.

February 1988 and organised by the Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies of Melbourne, and the protests against the unique exhibition of archaeological finds from ancient Macedonia which the Greek Ministry of Culture sent on tour round various Australian cities in November 1988. In both cases it was clear that the Slavo-Macedonian protests were the result of the fact that the Greeks had "dared" to use the name Macedonia and to exhibit Macedonian cultural treasures as examples of Greek culture.

The Macedonian issue in Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations

However, if in countries on other continents the dispute focused principally on the definition of national identity and on the appropriation of the name Macedonia, in the Balkans the problem was not confined to its cultural dimensions. International observers will be familiar with the tense relations which, for long periods of time, were the rule between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria over the Macedonian question. The cultural side of the problem, with Skopje casting doubt on the Bulgarian historical presence in the broader area of Macedonia, was certainly a standing cause for the stirring up of passions. But behind that lurked a mutual suspicion between Yugoslavs and Bulgarians over the other side's claims on their Macedonian territories. The Yugoslavs claimed that the Bulgarians, by refusing to admit the existence of a "Macedonian" nation —and consequently of a "Macedonia" minority on their soil —were persisting in the belief that the Slavs of Macedonia were Bulgarians. And since they were Bulgarians —ran the Yugoslav theory— the territory of Macedonia, and the Socialist Republic in particular, ought one day to be incorporated into the Bulgarian homeland. This suspicion relied on the fact that, in the past, as soon as a change had come about in international conditions the Bulgarians had hastened to take advantage of it. On the first occasion, they occupied Yugoslav Macedonia as allies of the Germans and attempted to annex it. On the second occasion, after the Stalin-Tito split, Dimitrov at first acknowledged the existence of a "Macedonian" nation (in 1944-48) and then Bulgaria performed a volte-face and rebaptised the "Macedonians" as Bulgarians, while at the same time encouraging subversive elements inside the Socialist Republic of Macedonia itself in the hope of opening up a way for the region to be annexed. Despite Sofia's protestations of peaceful intentions with regard to the inviolability of frontiers and specific proposals for the signing of a proclamation which would confirm the current territorial status as final, Belgrade refused to accept assurances and continued to be suspicious, as a



Pavlos Melas, National Historical Museum, Athens.

result of Bulgaria's almost blind commitment to the policy of the Soviet Union. This policy had in the past undergone considerable shifts *vis-à-vis* Yugoslavia, and the leaders in Sofia had always hastened to align themselves with it, whatever their own judgement may have been.

The Bulgarian side, too, had reservations about how far Belgrade's intentions were peaceful. Behind the Yugoslav demands for recognition of the "Macedonian" minority, the Bulgarians discerned an attempt to keep alive the grounds for territorial claims on Bulgarian Macedonia as soon as the condition were ripe. The Bulgarians could not forget easily that at a time when Bulgaria, as a former ally of Hitler's Germany, was being dragged before the Paris Peace Conference (1946) and its international position was hardly enviable, Tito, with Stalin's aid, was pressing Dimitrov to recognise the Bulgarians of Macedonia as "Macedonians" —every last one of them— and, moreover, to consent to the annexation of Bulgarian Macedonia as part of a united Macedonia within the framework of the Yugoslav Federation. If that plan was not carried out at the time, it was because of the crisis which had broken out in Soviet-Yugoslav relations. Nor would the Bulgarians agree to the "Macedonisation" of a large part of Bulgarian history and of their cultural heritage. However, in order to bring about some measure of improvement in the gloomy atmosphere hanging over their bilateral relations with Yugoslavia as a result of the Macedonian issue, the Bulgarians made some interesting alternative proposals. They stated that although they regarded the Slav population of Macedonia as being of Bulgarian descent, they nonetheless accepted that the political and social conditions in Yugoslav Macedonia had, since 1944, been entirely different and had allowed the formation of a new national identity. These conditions, though —which of course existed nowhere else than in Yugoslav Macedonia— did not and could not affect the populations of neighbouring countries. The Bulgarians went as far as to propose a compromise formula over the sensitive point of the cultural heritage: they would be prepared, they said, to accept that certain events and personalities in the broader area of Macedonia (for example, the Ilinden rising) formed part of the joint cultural heritage of the Bulgarians and the "Macedonians". This was indeed a shrewd manoeuvre, but it did not meet with Yugoslav approval, perhaps because Belgrade and Skopje were afraid that even the slightest concession to weaken their monopoly on "Macedonian" history would bring the edifice they had so painstakingly built with stolen materials tumbling down.

Bulgarian policy over Macedonia however had positive results in another direction. The categorical statements made since 1964 by Bulgarian leaders to the effect that their country had no territorial or minority

claims on Greece allowed the development of relations of actual good neighbourliness and co-operation between the two countries. Moreover, the negative aspects of the history of those relations then passed from the domain of politics into the province of scholarly review. For the first time—and for nearly a quarter of a century—relations between Greeks and Bulgarians were not only trouble-free but could be described as positive. That was undoubtedly a lesson in how even in the Balkans the most painful memories can be overcome when there is the will, the perspicacity and the political realism.

All the same, after the collapse of Communism in Bulgaria, a kind of outdated nationalism started to emerge in certain political quarters there. The developments in Yugoslavia, particularly Skopje's decision to declare independence, aroused keen Bulgarian interest in the region, which the Bulgarians have always regarded as "Bulgarian land". The first manifestation of this was Bulgaria's official recognition of the independent "Republic of Macedonia". This provoked protests in Greece, and Athens, as we shall see, made strenuous efforts, in the context of the European Community, to extract guarantees from the emerging state that it would not make territorial or minority claims against Greece and would adopt a name that contained no implications of territorial claims. Sofia's hasty action has clouded Greek-Bulgarian relations over the Macedonian question. It is too soon to say whether the cloud will pass or whether it will cast a permanent shadow over Greece and Bulgaria's hitherto excellent relations.

Greece and the "Macedonian Question"

It is obvious that from the objective point of view there can be no "Macedonian question" for Greece as far as territorial and minority claims are concerned. The legal status of the country's northern borders is safeguarded by international treaties such as those of Bucharest (1913), which ended the Second Balkan War, and of Neuilly (1919) and Paris (1947) which ended the First and Second World Wars.

The ethnological composition of Greek Macedonia, which at the time of Ottoman rule was an inextricable tangle of nationalities, religions and languages, is today homogeneous to an extent rare for the Balkan peninsula. Contributions were indubitably made to this by the widespread movements of populations which occurred at the time of the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and of the First World War, by the large-scale exchanges of populations between Greece and Turkey and Greece and Bulgaria in the

inter-war period, by the arrival of Greek refugees from Yugoslavia, Romania and Russia (apart from those who came from Bulgaria and Turkey), by the final departure of the remnants of the Slav population at the end of the German and Bulgarian occupation (1944) and the Civil War (1949) and by the overseas emigration of the 1950s. The latest available figures (from the Greek census of 1981) show that the thirteen prefectures of Macedonia contain some two million Greeks. Of the once-flourishing communities of Jews and Armenians, which were decimated by the events of the war, only a few thousand people are left, most of them resident in Thessaloniki.

The economic development and social conditions which caused mobility in the population during the post-war period attracted the agricultural population of the border areas into the urban centres. As a result, the various groups of the population —whether indigenous or of refugee origin— have now, after three generations, become members of uniform social and economic strata with a common education, religion and language. However, this process of convergence has not wiped out all trace of local cultural characteristics, which continue to be preserved and indeed developed with a sense of love and pride by the various sections of the population. In our day, this trend (which is encountered throughout Greece) keeps traditions alive and at the same time, by cross-fertilisation, gives birth to new creative cultural activities.

In recent years there has been a strongly growing sense of national awareness, as the impressive archaeological finds from various parts of Macedonia have confirmed in the most authentic manner the Greek roots of Macedonia. The fact that the area of Greek Macedonia today is identical with the Macedonia of Philip's time —with the addition of only some narrow strips which today are part of the Macedonian territories of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria— creates among Greek Macedonians a feeling of an *ipso jure* spatial inheritance from their forefathers. Similar testimony to the marked presence of Hellenism in Macedonia is provided by the recent evidence turned up by historical research into the Byzantine and Ottoman periods.

It is, then, necessary to investigate how Greece has become involved in the "Macedonian disputes".

Perhaps the most important cause can be traced to the insecurity which the Greeks have traditionally felt and which was the result of the military events of the 20th century. It should not be forgotten that in two World Wars parts of Greek Macedonia were occupied by the Bulgarian army, and that during the Civil War there was a direct danger of Greece losing Macedonia, which would have been annexed to a unified Macedonian state

within the framework either of Federal Yugoslavia or of a Balkan Communist Federation. The flux for which Balkan relations were noted in the past and the interventions in the area of the Great Powers of the day have left behind powerful remnants of uncertainty and suspicion. Forty years of propaganda activities from Skopje, moreover, have done nothing to dispel these suspicions; rather the reverse.

A second reason to which particular attention should be paid is the sensitivity of the Greeks towards the historical continuity of their race from antiquity through medieval Byzantium down to the present. Historians are well acquainted with the storm of protest which broke out when, in the 19th century, the German scholar Fallmerayer attempted to discredit the idea of the continuity of Hellenism. The Greek historian Paparrigopoulos, of course, found serious arguments with which to rebut Fallmerayer's theories, but the reaction which the German scholar had provoked increased the nationalist zeal of the Greeks of the time and their determination to see the realization of their vision of a modern Greek state. Today, it is the historical revisionists of Skopje who have undertaken a Fallmerayer-type provocation. The systematic counterfeiting of Macedonian history was initially treated by the Greeks as ludicrous and unworthy of their attention. However, constant reiteration, the monopolising of the name "Macedonia" and the carefully planned campaign to impose these novel theories abroad compelled the Greeks to awake. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this awakening, *mutatis mutandis*, of course, was in many ways similar to the reaction caused in the 19th century by Fallmerayer's theories. It is quite natural that the Greeks, a historic people, should be particularly sensitive towards anyone tampering with their historical heritage.

As the guardians of a creative tradition in history and a culture unique in Europe, they are in no way disposed to abandon that tradition to the political expediency of those set on looting it.

In brief, Greek policy over the Macedonian question, a policy which has been maintained for forty years and more, could be summarised as follows.

Greece has no territorial or even minority claims against her neighbouring states. She believes that the borders established by international treaties and ratified by the Helsinki Final Act are inviolable. As for Greek Macedonia, Greece is convinced that the ethnological homogeneity of the area makes it impervious to the various demands upon it which, in the past, have been advanced in the form of territorial or minority claims.

Before Yugoslavia's federal structure collapsed, Greece saw her northern neighbour as a basic factor in safeguarding peace and security in the

Balkans. This was why she lobbied for the Federation to hold together and remain stable. Previously, even when provoked by ultra-nationalist circles in Skopje, Greece had been careful not to aggravate the situation still further, in the hope that a more prudent attitude would prevail in the sensitive area of Yugoslav Macedonia. Skopje, however, regularly misinterpreted the Greek position. She was accused of denying the existence of a people, of a language, and of a literature, and thus of intervening in Yugoslavia's internal affairs, in breach of the ethnic and human rights of an entire nation. This simplistic interpretation of Greek policy was self-evidently mistaken. The problem was not whether Greece acknowledged or failed to acknowledge a newly formed nation, the language which that nation spoke and the literature it created; the bone of contention was the name which that nation used to define itself. As we have noted above, the name "Macedonian" —an ancient Greek name— is used even in Greece as a geographical attribute to refer to the inhabitants of the geographical area of Greek Macedonia. If that name were to be established and monopolised by Skopje's Slavs, enormous confusion would ensue both in Greece and abroad, since the Greeks of Macedonia use it in its geographical sense. Apart from its practical aspect, of course, the dispute over the name is also connected with the cultural heritage which it expresses; and the Greeks are not prepared to auction off their cultural heritage. Consequently, the point at issue is not that a nation is not being recognised, but that those who have appropriated a name should cease to monopolise it.

The crisis in Yugoslavia (1990-92): Recent developments and the revival of the "Macedonian Question"

The dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation in 1991 and the individual federal republics' demands to be recognised by the International Community as independent states have made the "Macedonian Question" a burning issue once more. At the same time, there is increasing apprehension over the prospects which development in Skopje are creating for the Balkans in general.

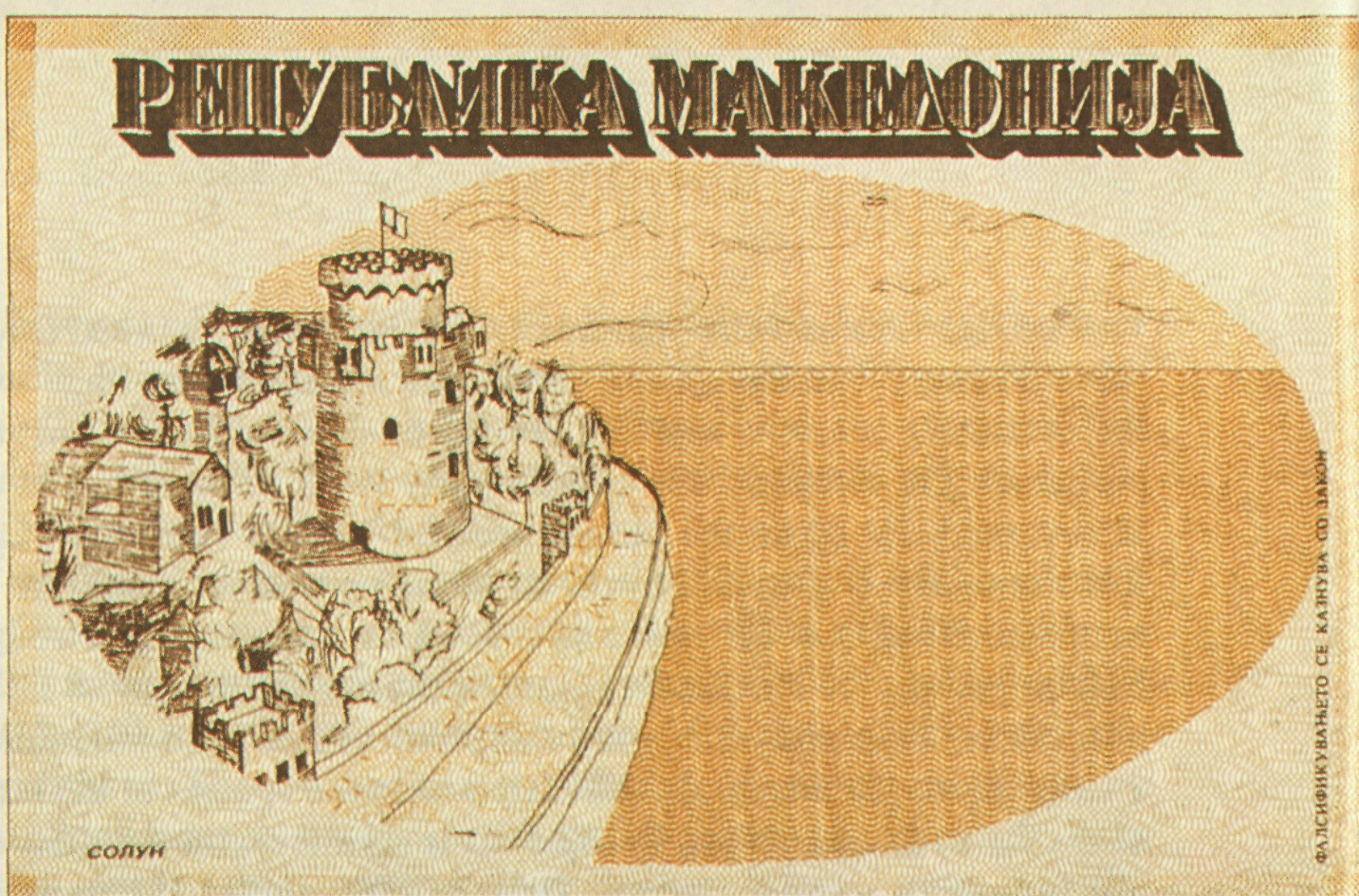
During 1991, these developments were signalled by the first multi-party elections in Skopje (in November 1990) and a referendum (in September 1991). The result of the referendum was that the former "Socialist Republic of Macedonia", which had meanwhile changed its name to the "Republic of Macedonia", decided to declare itself an independent state.

The elections and the referendum enabled those political forces which wanted complete independence for Skopje to take centre stage and exploit the escalating tensions and the revival of nationalist sentiments. In the parliamentary elections, the biggest party (with 37 seats out of a total of 120) turned out to be the ultranationalist VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation). Both its name and its manifesto echo the notorious VMRO of the 19th century, which spread terror throughout the Balkan peninsula. The modern party's charter states that its mission and purpose is, *inter alia*, "the spiritual, political and economic union of the divided Macedonian people and state within the context of the future unity of the Balkans and United Europe". It is a policy with manifest expansionist intentions against Greece. The VMRO's political importance is not confined to its electoral strength, for it also strongly influences internal policy, and representatives of other parties tend to emulate its extreme positions. Officials in Skopje have also been known to express similar views. While on tour in Australia in December 1990, V. Topurkovski, Skopje's representative to the former Federal Presidency of Yugoslavia, stated unequivocally that: "The primary aim of this newly created state will be to liberate the unredeemed Macedonians and unify the broader area of Macedonia".

The new constitution came into force in November 1991, despite the protests and abstention of the region's Albanian population. Albanians account for approximately 36% of the 2,200,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, the presence of other nationalities, including Turks, Vlachs (most of whom have Greek national consciousness), and Gypsies, in this economically undeveloped republic indicates an explosively mixed population, of which the self-styled "Macedonians" are barely in the majority.

The new constitution contains clear "irredentist" and expansionist aims. In the preamble, the references to the Declaration of the Republic of Krushevo-Ilinden (1903) and the *Manifesto of the Anti-Fascist National Assembly for the Liberation of the People of Macedonia (ASNOM, 1944)* clearly proclaim the historical continuation of the "Macedonian people's" struggle to "liberate" and unite the three parts of the geographical area of Macedonia. Specifically, the ASNOM's manifesto states:

"Macedonians under Bulgaria and Greece. The unification of the entire Macedonian people depends on your participation in the gigantic anti-Fascist front. Only by fighting the vile Fascist occupier will you gain your right to self-determination and to unification of the entire Macedonian people within the framework of Tito's Yugoslavia, which has become a free community of emancipated and equal peoples. May the struggle of the Macedonian Piedmont incite you to even bolder combat against the Fascist



Commemorative banknote issued in Skopje on 15 January 1992: It depicts the White Tower of Thessaloniki.

oppressors! May the path of this past of Macedonia become your path, since it is the only one which leads to freedom and unification of the entire Macedonian nation! May your participation in the general anti-Fascist struggle give life to the principles proclaimed by the first Macedonian National Council and erase the borders erected dividing brother from brother, Macedonian from Macedonian”.

As we have already seen, once the crisis had broken out, Greece did everything possible to preserve the Yugoslav Federation and prevent upheavals in the Balkans. But the force of circumstances meant that the Federation was not to survive. Greece’s aim then became to prevent destabilisation and conflict from spreading southwards. But Skopje’s initiatives since the referendum of September 1991 to go ahead with the creation of an independent state named the “Republic of Macedonia” have opened up prospects of further conflict in the broader area of the southern Balkans.

From the start, Greece made clear her objection to the recognition of an independent state with the name of “Macedonia” on her northern border. This did not mean that Skopje was denied the right to create its own independent state with its own language, history and traditions. Every people is entitled to determine its own future, as long as the choices it makes remain within the strictures of international law. But Greece could not accept that the Macedonian name be used by a Slavic state or a Slavic people. The terms “Macedonia”, “Macedonian” and their derivatives

belong to Greece and the Greeks. They are part of the Greeks' national and cultural heritage and as such were recorded in history centuries before the Slavs appeared in Macedonia or even in the Balkans.

The Greek view was that the terms "Macedonia" and "Macedonian" could only be of geographical significance. If Skopje wished to join the ranks of the independent states with the acquiescence of its neighbour Greece—an important factor both for its survival and for the peaceful co-existence of the various peoples of this region—then it had to abandon any notion of appropriating the name of Macedonia to signify its statehood.

The Macedonian name is part of Hellenism's national and cultural identity. The prodigious mass demonstrations in Thessaloniki, Melbourne and other cities abroad, together with the thousands of resolutions passed all over the world, show how deeply rooted this concept is.

"Macedonia" cannot be used as the name of an independent state which has sovereignty over only a part of the broader geographical area of Macedonia. As one very detailed analysis of the question points out, the choice of a name is an expression not simply of the right to self-definition (which is indeed recognised in international law and practice), but above all of the historical territorial claims which that name implies. But if Skopje becomes a subject of international law today with the name of "Macedonia", a sovereign state will be created with an international status, but it will not cover the whole of the territorial area which its name denotes.

It is precisely this fact which leaves the way clear for the creation of a national centre which, at least to begin with, will "watch over" and "protect" the areas with the same name outside its borders. So Skopje's promotion to a sovereign state with the name of "Macedonia" will demote both Greek and Bulgarian Macedonia to unredeemed areas "in bondage".

The recognition of a state under a specific name gives the citizens of that state, *and them alone*, the right to define themselves by that name. But their right to self-definition cannot be allowed to supplant the Greeks' anterior and historically established right to use the term "Macedonia"¹.

Greece's attitude is not due to stubborn or vengeful resistance to her neighbours, but rather it constitutes a pan-Hellenic effort to protect Greece's historical and cultural identity, which is part of the broader European heritage. This is why the European Community has made it a condition of recognising Skopje's independence that the new state will not harbour any territorial claims against Greece, will not produce hostile propaganda against Greece and, most importantly, will not use a name

1. Stelios Nestor. "The struggle over the name". To Vima. 23 February 1992.

which implies territorial claims (16 December 1991). There can be no doubt that the appropriation and monopolising of "Macedonia" as the state's official name does clearly suggest the notion of expansion to the detriment of neighbouring countries; particularly Greece, in which the greater part of the geographical area of Macedonia lies.

The decision taken in December was backed by another in Gimaraes, Portugal, on 30 April 1992, which recorded the European Community's intention of recognising the new republic, but under a name which would be acceptable to all the parties concerned (including Greece, therefore). The EC's position on this matter was further clarified by the decision taken at the Summit Meeting in Lisbon on 27 June 1992, when the Council of Europe declared its willingness to recognise the republic with its present borders... under a name which does not include the term "Macedonia".

The Skopje government refused to comply with the decision, and in December 1992 applied for membership of the United Nations, thus neatly skirting the process of recognition by the EC. The Security Council eventually passed a decision (No 817, 7 April 1993) accepting Skopje as a member of the UN, but under the interim name of the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM) and with no right to fly its flag with the sixteen-rayed "Sun of Vergina" at the UN until the problems connected with the republic's name and the confidence-building measures had been resolved. At the same time, the co-chairmen of the Conference on Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen, were asked to do what they could to settle the differences relating to the name, historical and national emblems, constitutional adjustments to delete references to irredentist intentions, border guarantees, and hostile propaganda produced by Skopje.

The elections held on 10 October 1993 brought about a change of government in Greece, and the new PASOK government refused to continue the discussions with Skopje unless the latter gave some tangible evidence of good will, such as the removal of the Sun of Vergina from its flag, the deletion from the constitution of references to territorial aspirations against Greece, the cessation of its anti-Greek and irredentist propaganda, and a formal pledge to respect the existing borders. In return, Greece would proceed to expand the two countries' good neighbourly relations, as long as Skopje kept its word. At the end of 1993, the Greek government stated that it would not recognise the FYROM under the name of Macedonia or any variation thereon. But it did express the hope that Skopje's leaders would realise that, in the context of the good relations to be established between the two countries, they should settle the question of the name in such a way as not to provoke Greece nor to make it a cause of unrest in a highly sensitive area.



Frontispiece of a calendar produced in Skopje in 1992, showing a map of "Great Macedonia".

With the New Year, it became clear that, regardless of the various ulterior motives that now induced a number of countries to recognise the FYROM, the Greeks, both within Greece and in the Diaspora, were not



Mass rally for Macedonia, Thessaloniki, February 1992.

prepared to allow anyone to undermine their national sovereignty and their historical and cultural identity and heritage.

Conclusions and appraisals

Apart from the cultural dimension of the whole question, Skopje's determination to appropriate the Macedonian name in its republic's title masks two manifestly political issues. One is the fact that the name "Republic of Macedonia" perpetuates Skopje's territorial claims on the whole

of the geographical area of Macedonia. We have already seen that the republic covers no more than 38% of this area, compared with the 52%, 9% and 1% held by Greece, Bulgaria and Albania respectively. When asked how 38% can monopolise the name of the whole, Skopje's only answer is silence. It is difficult, obviously, when it is seeking international recognition and respect, for Skopje to explain to the international community that its persistence on the issue of the name is vital to the prosecution of its expansionist plans for the Macedonian territory in neighbouring countries.

The second political factor is that once the new state acquires the official name of Macedonia, all the name's derivatives will be sanctioned for use by Skopje's Slavs and will, moreover, be Slavicised. This means that anything and everything Macedonian—that is, originating in the broader geographical area of Macedonia—will automatically be attributed to the “Republic of Macedonia” and the “Macedonian nation”. When described as “Macedonian”, the history of the Greeks in Macedonia, the Macedonian Greeks' political and cultural achievements, even the commercial activity of firms in Northern Greece whose letterhead contains the word “Macedonia”, will be regarded as having been “plundered” from the Republic, all thanks to the appropriation of a name! In other words, Skopje's Slavs are also demanding the patent-right and the copyright to the name. They hope that if use of the term is Slavicised for long enough the Greeks will eventually be dispossessed of all historical and cultural reference to Macedonia; and in the end will be presented as “illicit” occupiers of their ancestral Macedonian land.

Simplistic though this reasoning may sound, the experience of a hundred years of hatred testifies that behind Skopje's leaders' stubborn adherence to a name which does not belong to them lies the vision of a “great and united Macedonia”. Just as more than a century ago the spectre of the “great Bulgaria” of the San Stefano Treaty (1878) was hovering over this same territory. One would have expected that the experiences and suffering which that idea heaped upon the Bulgarian people then would make Skopje's nationalists more prudent today.

The dangers posed by nationalistic games in this part of the Balkans were pointed out long ago, when Tito created his federal Macedonian state in 1944. This is how Stettinius, US Secretary of State, succinctly described the situation in a circular issued on 26 December 1944:

“The Department has noted with considerable apprehension increasing propaganda rumors and semi-official statements in favor of an autonomous Macedonia, emanating principally from Bulgaria, but also from Yugoslav partisan and other sources, with the implication that Greek territory would be included in the projected state.



From the mass rally in Thessaloniki, February 1992.

"This Government considers talk of a Macedonian 'nation', Macedonian 'Fatherland', or Macedonian 'national consciousness' to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic nor political reality, and sees in its present revival a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece".

At an unsuspected time, this official American document spontaneously speaks of the artificial creation of a "Macedonian state", the "demagogic" exploitation of the name of Macedonia, and the territorial claims put forward against Greece with the name of Macedonia as the tip of the iceberg.

The Greek government has said that it wants to let bygones be bygones. Together with its partners in the European Community, it is prepared not only to recognise the independence of the new state on Greece's northern

border, but also to take all the necessary steps to ensure its survival, its territorial integrity, and its long-term economic development. In this way, through a system of regional security, the new state's borders will be safeguarded. For the time being, Greece, which is the only neighbouring country with no territorial claims against Skopje, is the new mini-state's only means of survival; provided that the latter's leaders leave behind the nationalistic visions of the 19th century and start looking towards the 21st.

For everyone knows that buildings made with stolen materials are not unlike sandcastles. They have a certain initial charm, but the first wave that surges in will bring them tumbling down.

